



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



BRONZE VASE—ONE DECORATED WITH LEAVES AND SNAILS
—OTHER WITH HUGE SPIDER

The Art of Hugo Elmquist

By BLANCHE M. HARCOURT

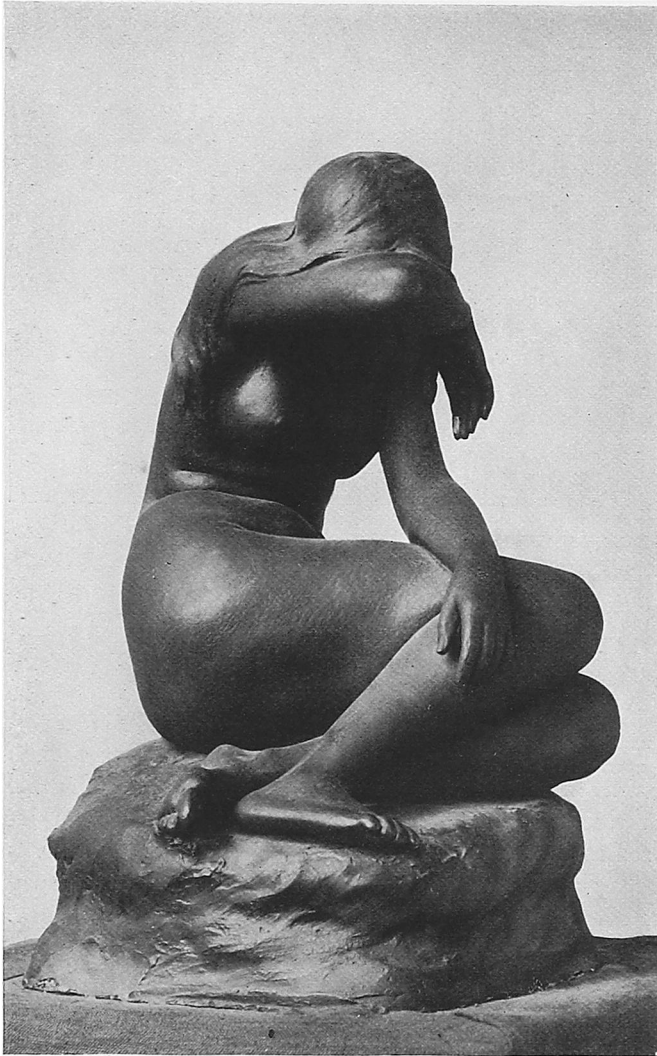
IN one of the oldest streets of Florence, Italy, is situated the Palazzo dell'Arte della Lana, a quaint, old fourteenth century palace that has been restored to its former beauty. Here, on Wednesday afternoons, visitors from many odd corners of the world are graciously received by Hugo Elmquist, the sculptor, and his charming wife, Madam Elmquist. Madam's vivid personality stands out glowing and full of life against the quiet, mystic presence of her husband. Hugo Elmquist is essentially a visionary man; his whole art is the development of an intense inner life.

Ah, the people who *do* things! We look at them and wonder if they are conscious of their power. Surely Hugo Elmquist is not, and yet he is one of the most brilliant sculptors in the world today working in bronze. Oblivious of all the ancient art around him, tenderly and lovingly he works out his own original ideas. Perhaps that is the secret of his art; he loves it into perfection. Here in Florence, where one sees so much of the old masters' work,

it is refreshing to find a man daring enough to originate new thoughts in his marble and bronze.

The Hugo Elmquist bronzes are works of exquisite beauty, all of them shaped after his own design, in one unbroken line, beautiful and noble. That is what he has emphasized in all his work, the beauty of the unbroken line. This was almost impossible to achieve in the bronze until Hugo Elmquist invented his own unique method of casting, whereby he produces the perfect whole.

If genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains, Hugo Elmquist qualifies. He has built his own furnaces, invented his own method of casting, which is the wonder and admiration of artists, manufacturers, and craftsmen in bronze, and he and Madam Elmquist, working together, have evolved their own chemistry for coloring the vases. Neither had more than a superficial knowledge of chemistry, but together they have worked out all this beauty we see in the works before us. Together, step by



*"EVE" (Bronze)
By HUGO ELMQUIST*

step, they have mastered every detail of their work, even to selecting the clay suitable for casting. Donatello, Cellini, and other old masters in bronze achieved their greatest success with the Florence clay, and Hugo Elmqvist had to come to Florence to accomplish his most notable work.

Instead of copying the old masters, however, he turns to Nature to add to his beauty of form. Around the slender neck of a tall urn he gracefully twines the leaves of some trailing vine, so natural the very tendrils curl out toward you in slender

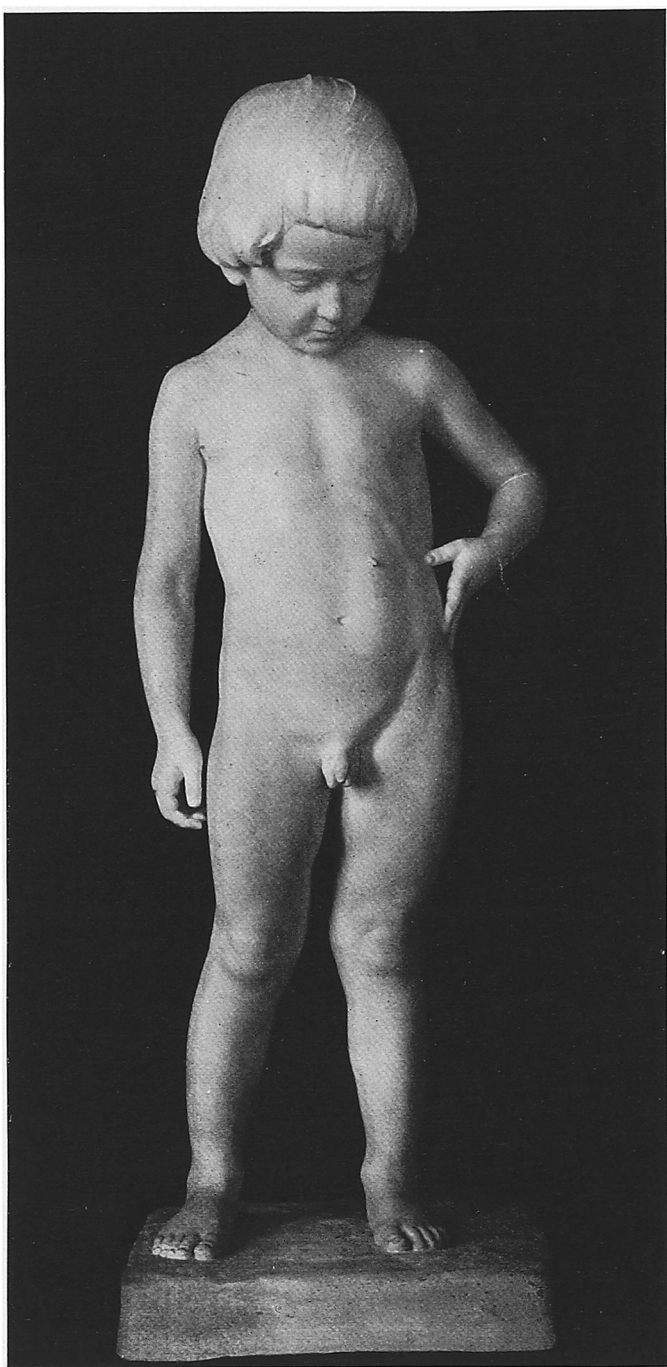
bronze threads. And here among the leaves is a grasshopper, so true to nature, even in the coloring, that you expect to see it "hop" before you can touch it. Another small bronze bowl has a large darning needle, with wings outspread, for its sole ornament. And could anything be more lovely than the locusts clustered about the rim of this quaint vase? A small jar has a circle of leaves about it with snails coiled on the leaves.

Then there is the wonderful tall urn with a "spring wedding" for its decoration.

Here the sculptor delicately moulded the whole wedding procession, full of life and motion. First the bride and groom, two big darning needles, drawn in their car of state, a leaf, by two large grasshoppers, called here "hopping horses." The bridesmaids and groomsmen follow, a procession of beetles. Even the mother-in-law is present, very important and stately, her antennae erect and waving like the feathers on some fashionable dame's hat. Grandpa is a big bug, and the grandchildren are little wasps and flies. And the path of this bridal procession is strewn with flowers.

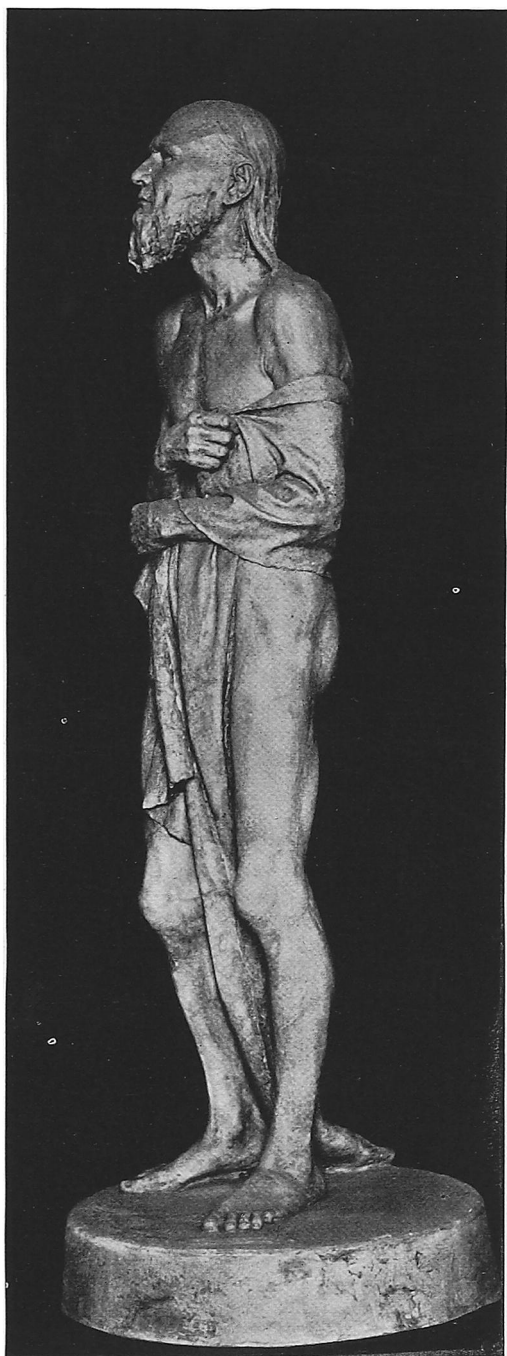
We have had bronze medals, busts, statues of rare beauty, but who before Hugo Elmquist ever thought of immortalizing the little insects of the field in an art so noble as sculpture? Some of the vases are left in the natural bronze, so soft and warm. Others by the etching of the acids are turned into shape iridescent with color, rivaling our own beautiful Tiffany glass in shading. I have never seen anything more beautiful than the shading of one of the vases from green at the base to a wonderful, mystic Pompeian blue at its slender neck. Each vase thus expresses in form and color the beauty that was in mind of the sculptor when he conceived the thing; though Madam Elmquist now does the coloring for him, thus adding her artistic nature to his in the completion of the work.

Form, color, and to complete the art of



BOY AND LADY-BUG—SCULPTOR'S LITTLE SON (Marble)
By HUGO ELMQUIST

the conception, we find that each vase has a note of its own. The sculptor's charming fifteen-year-old daughter says in her



"OLD AGE" (Marble)
By HUGO ELMQUIST

quaint English (the child already speaks five languages), "Have you heard it ring? I think it is so sweet." A gentle tap, and

this little bronze jar will ring for you a note so sweet and haunting that for a moment the studio fades, and you are out in some green field picking the leaves you see twined about the vase. Form, color, sound, all expressed so exquisitely in the bronze.

But these quaint conceptions are only a later outcome of the sculptor's art. His statues are equally marvelous, each one expressing some deep phase of life as the artist feels it. One of his largest pieces is the study of grim Old Age. There is a sublimity about the whole gaunt figure that stirs us deeply, but the tragedy of physical decay is forgotten as we note the head uplifted and eyes gazing steadily out into the future, with faith in the promise of a new life beyond. It might almost be called "Immortality," so conscious are we that the spirit within the wasted old body can never die.

In sharp contrast is the life-sized statue of the sculptor's small son, gazing absently at a lady bug crawling slowly across his naked little body. Here again Nature adds to the sculptor's art; take away the bug and the statue is meaningless. The child's form is sturdy and beautiful as a study, but how much more interesting is the intent pose of the child as he watches the little insect. This is not mere technique, it is art expressing a fleeting moment of childhood.

Again in babyhood we see the infant absorbed in his own toes. Could anything be more natural? Have we not all at some time watched some particular baby groping for the interesting object it doesn't know is its own toe? From infancy we turn to the mother of the race. Eve having eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge is bowed with grief. And Hugo Elmqvist also possesses the art of true portraiture, his bust of Lady Paget being considered a remarkably lifelike piece of work.

Gazing on all these lovely works of art, which Madam Elmqvist interprets for you with such loving zeal, you turn to the one



BABYHOOD (Marble)
By HUGO ELMQUIST

who has created them so true to life and nature. And at your first glance you are struck with the utter simplicity of the man. His face expresses the deep thought within. One is even conscious of the weary labor required to express his world of inner beauty.

First the thought, then hours of labor fashioning that thought into form, later the casting of the bronze; and here the supreme moment of creation arrives. Again the sculptor's genius for taking infinite pains expresses itself, for he does all of his own casting, some pieces taking fifty and sixty hours in the burning. His metal must be more fluid than water, and to attain this requires enormous heat and pressure. During these critical hours the sculptor hardly eats or sleeps; everything in him is so concentrated on his work.

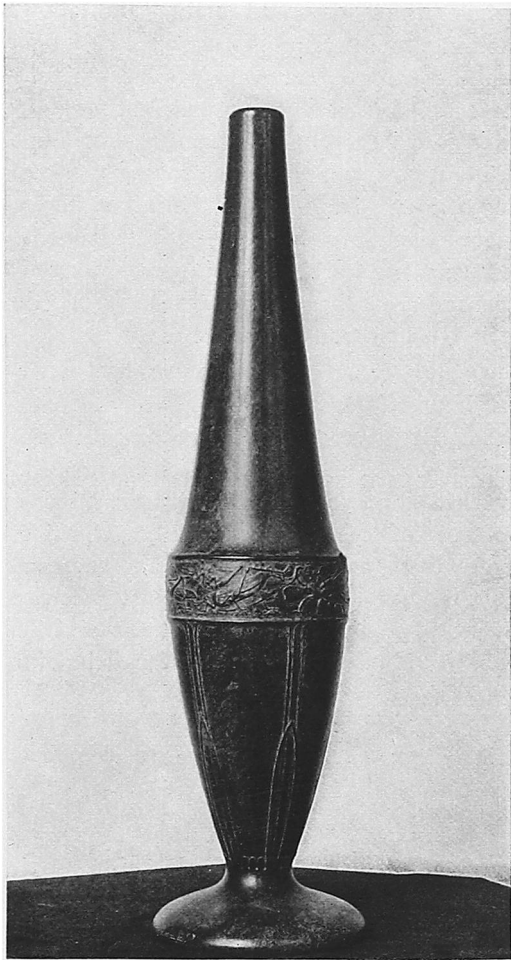
When working on a piece, the sculptor sees no one. He lives and dreams the

whole thing day and night, and allows nothing to interrupt his trend of thought till the work is completed. The majority of sculptors are content with forming the model for the bronze or marble, but Hugo Elmqvist's bronzes are the loving work of his own two hands, from the initial step to completion. Art is not his profession, but his very life itself. And his art is sacred; to have any other hand touch his work till it is finished would profane it for him.

Cellini's masterpiece, Perseus, as he tells us himself, was a work of monumental labor, but it was cast in parts and then put together. The great Michael Angelo worked for two years, trying to perfect a method of casting bronze in one perfect piece, then gave up in despair and returned to his marble. Hugo Elmqvist likewise spent years inventing his method, and he, too, would have given up in despair but for



MARBLE BUST OF LADY PAGET
By HUGO ELMQUIST



BRONZE VASE—"A SPRING WEDDING"
By HUGO ELMQUIST

Madam's enthusiastic encouragement. Now he has perfected his method and his bronzes are molded absolutely in one perfect piece. So perfect are they you can actually feel the muscles and bones underneath the smooth polished surface. In his *Memoirs*, Cellini states, "Certain Germans and Frenchmen, who plume themselves on knowing wonderful secrets, declare they can cast bronze so that it needs no retouching; but this is foolish talk, for after bronze has been cast it must be worked on with hammers and chisels." Hugo Elmquist does not chisel his work at all. This has caused considerable discussion among the art critics of Europe, but the foremost of them

have declared his work comparable to Rodin's. But there is no comparison, for we must remember that Hugo Elmquist has evolved an entirely new method of working in bronze, one that has never been perfected before, that is, the casting of a piece in the perfect whole. He works absolutely alone, never guided by public opinion or comment, regardless of praise or blame, faithfully he interprets life as he feels it. His is pure art, without any fads or fancies.

Hugo Elmquist was born in a little town in southern Sweden; in Ronneby, called the Garden of Sweden. His father was a carpenter, and the artist's first work was in wood carving. Then he studied decorative art in plaster at Stockholm. Later in Paris he won the Prix de Rome, and spent four years studying sculpture in Italy. After Rome he returned to Paris, and it was there he met the woman who is now his wife, and to whose devoted love and devotion he owes so much. Madam believes that none of us achieve our best work

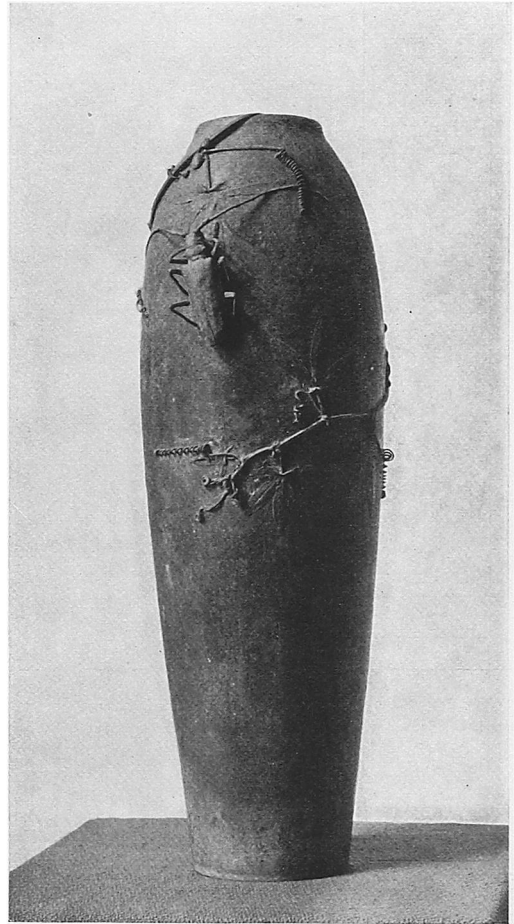


BRONZE VASE—GRASSHOPPER AND VINES
By HUGO ELMQUIST

alone; we need the inspiration of love to urge us on.

Madam Elmquist is an artist of note herself, and an indefatigable worker. Any fine day you can see her sketching the beauty spots of Florence. You may never realize how beautiful a gateway can be until you have seen her vivid sketch of it. Perhaps you would never have noticed the corner of the roof of some old building, so worn and gray with the passing of the centuries but wearing the corner full of bloom like a jewel, till Madam's picture brings out all its beauty for you. But her heart and soul are in her husband's work; all her thought is for him. They work together and thereby each attains the highest that is in them. As Madam Elmquist says: "To complete life it takes two minds, a man's and a woman's, working together."

The Hugo Elmquist bronzes have never been exhibited in America. Our duty makes such exhibitions prohibitive. But many Americans who have visited Florence have carried home with them one or more of the exquisite vases or statuettes in bronze, and a happy memory of the studio, of Hugo Elmquist, and of Madam Elmquist's joyous welcome.



BRONZE VASES DECORATED WITH LOCUSTS
AND VINES
By HUGO ELMQUIST